

Highlights of the *Survey of Resources and Assets*



**City of Hampton
2003**

Introduction

The *Survey of Resources and Assets* from Search Institute was conducted with Hampton youth during the week of February 17, 2003. This survey measures how many of the 40 developmental assets our community's youth believe they have. Assets are the essential qualities, experiences and skills that support successful growth and development in youth. This comprehensive survey, based on young people's perception, presents a snapshot for our community of how well we are providing, and assisting youth to acquire, these assets.

This is the second survey of Hampton youth using the Search Institute format. In November of 1998 the *Profiles of Student Life Attitudes and Behaviors* survey was administered. Following release of the results, a community-wide mobilization was launched in 2000 to recruit people and organizations to work together to raise the number of assets of Hampton youth.

This time the *Survey of Student Resources and Assets* was used; a slightly different instrument that also includes information on the Five Fundamental Resources for youth based on America's Promise. The survey presents results on average scores of developmental assets in addition to young people's perception of the supports available to them in the community.

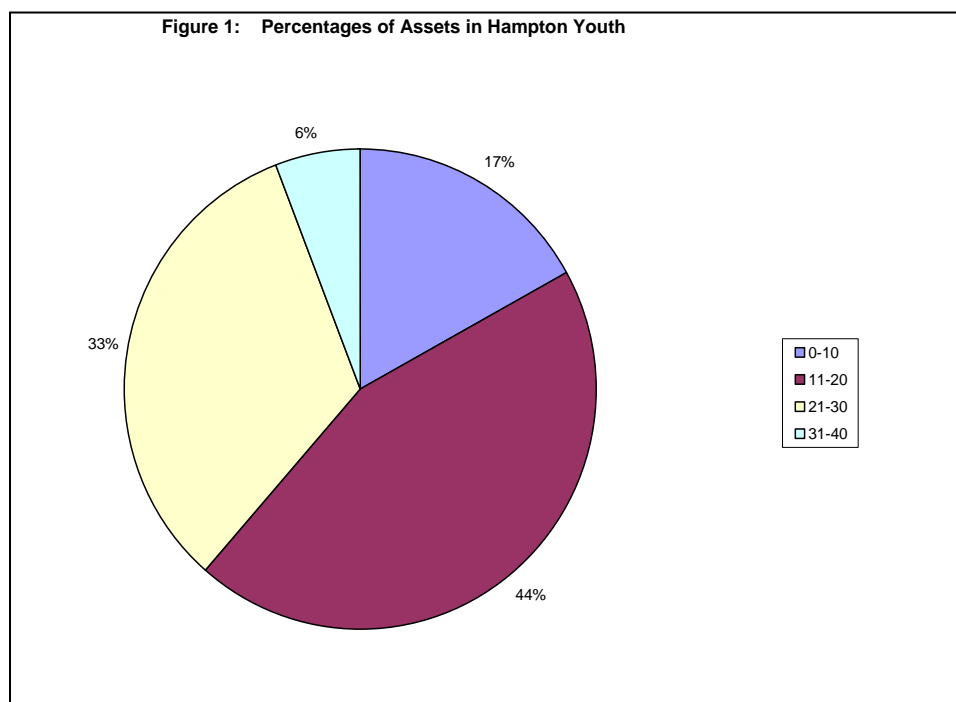
Cautions

- **Different samples and surveys.** Because the survey instruments and sampling technique were different, it is wise not to draw too many conclusions based on comparisons when looking at the data from 1998 and 2003, as some differences may be attributed to variances in sample. The surveys are a measurement of a representative sample of young people's attitudes and thus a snapshot of our community at two different moments in time.
- **Different world.** The world, and our community, is a different place in 2003 than it was in 1998 and this will affect the perceptions of youth. The post-September 11 world and its declining economy greatly affect our youth and their families. Not only are individual families impacted, but unprecedented cuts in federal and state funding, much of which had supported youth and families, have occurred. In addition, the high-stakes testing movement has fundamentally altered young people's relationship with the primary institution in their lives, the school.
- **Local issues.** Locally, the administration of this year's survey happened to coincide with the nation preparing for war in Iraq and the impending deployment of many local family members. In schools, February is a difficult month for student and faculty morale and some schools had been experiencing discipline problems. This can also affect young people's perception since they fill out the survey during school time.
- **Local vs. national norms.** Caution is also advised in comparing local asset numbers to national norms. National norms for the developmental assets instruments were last set in 2000, and thus not subject to the above-mentioned more recent influences. Other communities that have surveyed in the past year have noted a drop in their asset scores.

Findings

Despite these negative mitigating influences and Hampton’s challenges as a mature city, it is important to note that our community “held our own” as measured by this current asset survey.

- This year a statistically representative sample of 763 youth were surveyed, half of whom were of high school age and half of whom were in grades 6, 7 and 8.
- The overall asset average, and scores for most assets remained the same as those reported in the previous survey.
- The number of youth reporting 21 or more assets has increased from 36% to 39%. Numbers of assets were distributed as shown in *Figure 1*.



- The average number of assets in Hampton youth is 18.2.
- There is a noticeable gap in assets between girls and boys – 19.4 average assets for girls and 16.8 for boys.
- Assets for younger youth tend to be higher with the average number of assets declining with age. However, seventh graders reported a significantly low number of assets.

There is validity and reliability within the two instruments so we can gather valuable data from them. It is recommended, however, that the recent set of data be treated as a new baseline to inform our renewed efforts to build assets in Hampton youth.

The following additional findings are based on an initial analysis of the 2003 report. Search Institute has offered technical assistance to explore these results further and offer additional insights.

- Some asset scores were higher, especially those in which the community has placed substantial investment in the past few years as referenced in *Figure 2*.
- Some asset scores were lower such as Asset #10 Safety which may reflect our post-9/11 community.
- Other scores, such as #17 Creative Activities and #25 Reading for Pleasure were low in the previous survey, and even lower in this survey, perhaps reflecting a larger trend in our society.

Figure 2

Areas of asset improvement and corresponding community investments with potential impact:

Asset improvements	Community investments
Positive family communication	Healthy Families Partnership
Community values youth	Youth Are Resources
Caring school climate	CARE (school climate improvement)
School boundaries	CARE
Bonding to school	CARE
Cultural competence	Citizens Unity Commission

- There are a number of assets that appear to be strengths in our community, and some that present challenges as indicated in *Figures 3a and b*.

Figure 3a Our strengths

Assets in which Hampton youth exceed national averages:

External Assets

- Positive family communication
- School boundaries
- Time at home

Internal Assets

- Achievement motivation
- Restraint
- Cultural competence
- Resistance skills
- Self esteem
- Sense of purpose
- Positive view of personal future

Figure 3b Our challenges

Assets significantly lower than national averages:

External Assets

- Service to others
- Youth programs

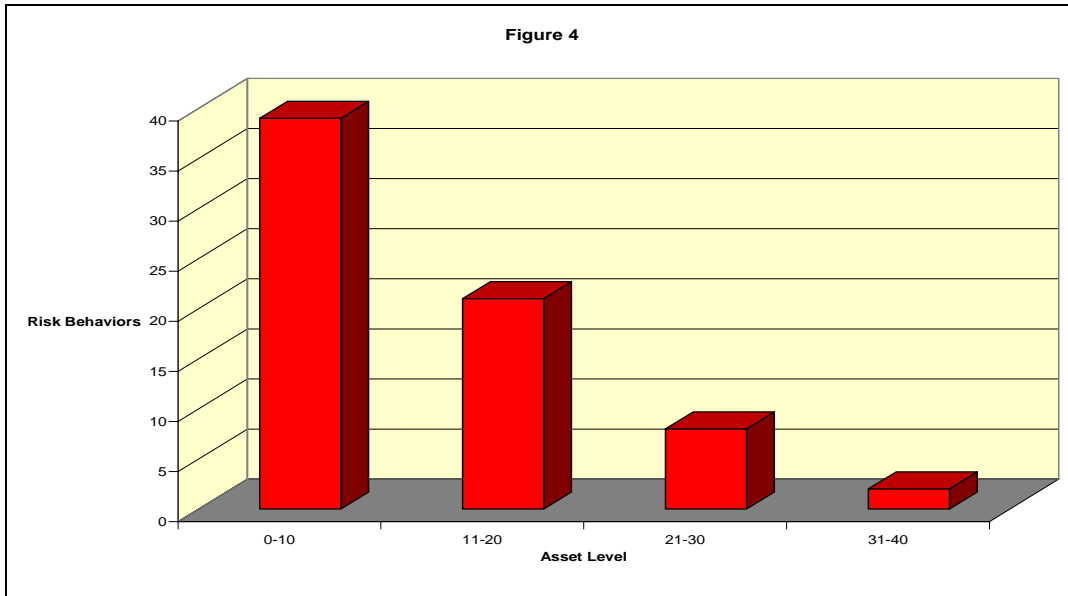
Internal Assets

- School engagement
- Responsibility
- Peaceful conflict resolution

- Consistent with the theory and findings of Search Institute, the more assets reported by Hampton youth, the fewer the risk behaviors and greater the thriving behaviors reported. See *Figures 4 and 5* on the next page.

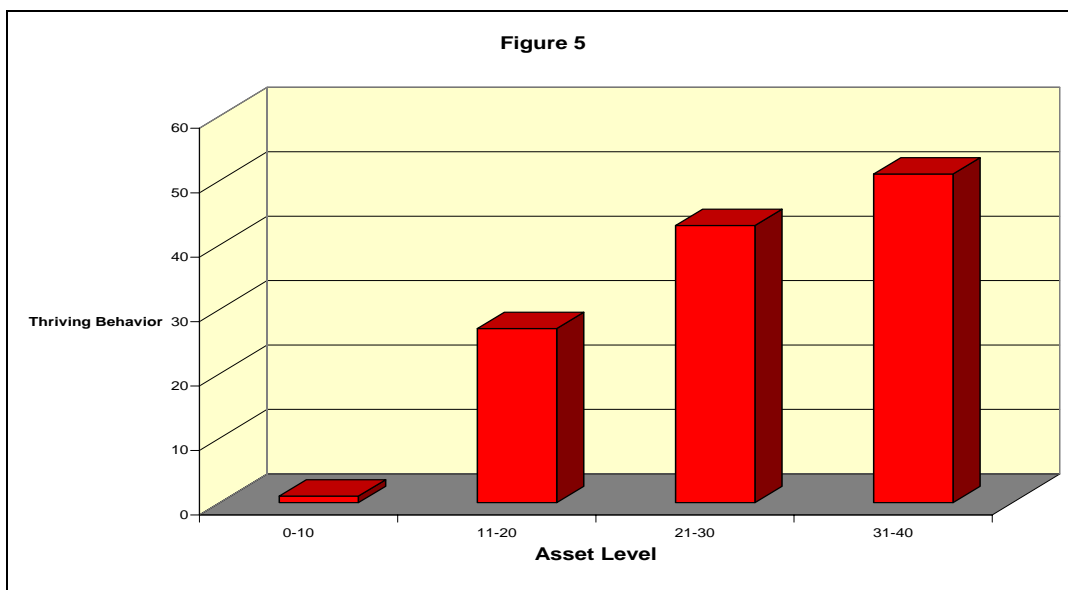
The Power of Assets to Protect

Risk behaviors were reported by high percentages of youth who only reported 1 to 10 assets. Conversely, only a small percentage of youth with 30 to 40 assets reported any involvement in risky behavior.



The Power of Assets to Promote

Thriving behaviors (taking care of health, doing well in school, etc.) were reported by few of the youth with low numbers of assets, whereas youth with high number of assets also reported high numbers of thriving behaviors.



Five Fundamental Resources

Survey questions about youth access to the **Five Fundamental Resources** are new in this survey. Founded on the work of America's Promise, these Resources are:

1. Ongoing relationships with caring adults
2. Safe places and structured activities during non-school hours
3. A healthy start for a healthy future
4. Marketable skills through effective education
5. Opportunities to serve

In many cases, these new categories provide a more in-depth examination of some of the asset categories, and this data will enhance our further understanding the assets. There are no national norms to date for these data.

1. Ongoing relationships with caring adults

Three-fourths report caring relationships with parents
About one-half report caring relationships with adults at school
One-third report caring relationships with adults in their neighborhood
Over half report caring relationships with adults in the community
One quarter report having a formal mentor

2. Safe places and structured activities during non-school hours

Over half go home after school most days and stay there
A majority of the others go to a friend's house, participate in a team or other activity, or "hang out" in the neighborhood, park or mall
Fewer than 20% work 3 or more days after school
The majority report feeling safe going to and from, and participating in, these activities

3. A healthy start for a healthy future

Most report use of, or access to, health services such as dentist, doctor and school nurse
About half report there is a professional within the school building they could go to with a problem
The majority report good exposure to health and risk reduction information in school

4. Marketable skills through effective education

About half spend 1 hour or more per day doing homework
Almost 75% see that skills learned in school will help prepare them for a future job
Nine out of ten are skilled in the use of a computer
Over half have a career they want to pursue and have talked with adults about it
80% report they have watched or helped someone do their job to learn about it

5. Opportunities to serve

Half report being asked to help on service or volunteer projects
Less than half spend an hour or more per week helping others without getting paid
About one-third believe there are lots of chances in our city to make a difference

Recommendations

Stay the course.

Researchers warn us that it takes extraordinary effort to move a social indicator. But we know that the asset approach works. Hampton has made many initial gains, especially in light of increased risk in our world, our challenges as a mature city and decreased funding for youth services. The asset report speaks to us that our youth need us now more than ever. **Asset building is a long-term commitment.**

Increase awareness efforts.

The past three years have been spent increasing public awareness and promoting the concept of developmental assets. This has been done on a very low budget with little man-power. Though numerous strategies have been put into place and many positive results have already been gained, **we have just scratched the surface** of educating the community and “turning them on” to the asset approach.

Commit resources to intentional asset building.

If the past three years have taught us anything, it is that asset building requires more than a verbal or token support of the concept. The report shows us that when resources are dedicated, when policies are in place and support is given for **intentionally building services, supports, and opportunities**, changes do occur. The school division and some organizations have already begun this process. Much more is needed before we reach the breadth and depth that will have a positive impact.

Work together, creatively.

In times of diminishing resources, it is vital for everyone to be “on the same page” and doing as much as we can. It is extremely difficult to sustain a focus on youth, especially when many of the negative community and national factors are outside of our control. But although many of the issues are global, asset building is the **“act locally”** solution.

Translate our asset-building efforts to youth.

The measurement of developmental assets is based on perception. Adults can actually be working hard to build assets, and yet these efforts may not register with young people. We must **increase young people’s awareness of the assets** and the community’s response to build those assets. In addition, **a stronger role for youth** in the overall direction and specific strategies within our initiative is needed in order to ensure their relevance to our youth.

Increase efforts to evaluate and learn from these measures.

Measuring with the overall assets survey every five years opens the possibility of recording a “spike” or decline in scores that may relate to a particular year; therefore, it may be more effective to **survey every two years**. In addition, Search Institute has developed new, more discrete, instruments that will assist us in measuring our progress within asset categories as well as within specific interventions.